

ANNUAL REPORT

TO

THE MEMBERS OF

SHORT HEATH

⇒ Urban & District & Council ⇐

BY

JOHN T. HARTILL,

L.R.C.P.L., M.R.C.S., Eng., J.P.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

January 27th, 1896.



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Medical Officer's Annual Report, 1895.

At Midsummer, 1895, the estimated population was 2748, and the number of houses 538. One hundred and thirty children were born during the year, and thirty two persons died. The birth-rate was therefore 47·3 and the death-rate 11·6 per thousand. The death-rate in the ten preceding years was 16·6 per thousand. The deaths from preventable causes, including Croup and Diarrhœa, were at the rate of 2·1 per thousand, as compared with 2·2 in the ten previous years. The deaths of infants under a year old per 1000 births registered were 61·5. The chief features of interest in these figures are that the death-rate is the lowest recorded since 1871 and probably the lowest on record; that whilst the birth-rate was exceptionally high infantile mortality was exceptionally low; and that the death-rate from preventable causes has only on five occasions been lower since 1871.

On the first of October the Local Government Board, as from that date, sanctioned the enlargement of the District so as to include therein the whole of the North side of New Invention which hitherto had been locally governed by the Wednesfield District Council, and the enlarged District—part of which was formerly in the parish of Willenhall, and part in the parish of Wednesfield—virtually became the Parish or Township of Short Heath. The approximate acreage of the newly-acquired territory being 215, the number of houses therein 114, and the estimated population 570, the Council at the end of the year governed an estimated population of 3373, living on 765 acres of land in 652 houses. As there was no death between October and December among the newly-acquired population, it follows as a fact that the death-rate for the year based on a calculation of population at Midsummer would be for the entire district lower than the figures given in the first paragraph of this report.

Of Zymotic diseases there came to my knowledge 6 cases of Scarlet Fever, 1 each of Diphtheria and Croup, 2 of Erysipelas, 2 of Whooping Cough, 70 of Measles, 6 of Chicken Pox, 3 of Diarrhœa and 17 of Influenza. Of these 6 were fatal. The most gratifying feature in these returns is the complete absence of Typhoid Fever and the smallness of the number of cases of infantile Diarrhœa, notwithstanding the prolonged duration of hot weather in the summer months, and what I imagine will prove to be the case an unusual prevalence of the disease elsewhere. No case of Small Pox occurred, but a woman who was exposed to infection in a neighbouring town was kept under surveillance and ineffectually advised to be revaccinated. As much care as was practicable with the means at command was taken to check the spread of Scarlet Fever, notably in preventing a Governess in a public Elementary School from attending school because she resided in infected premises.

The most serious epidemic of the year was that of Measles in its closing weeks. The Scholars affected were mainly those of the Board School. This School was closed by order of the Council, acting on my advice, for six weeks from November 23rd, and the effect of closure was for several weeks satisfactory, though it seems doubtful now whether the Scholars at other schools are not going to be seriously attacked. The attention of a Milk Purveyor whose family suffered from Measles was directed to section 9 of the Dairy Act, 1885.

Sickness from general causes was less prevalent than usual notwithstanding the extraordinary frost from January to March, which covered a period of about 66 days.

The frost caused the water-mains to break in numerous places, and the breakages combined with the consequent waste of water in localities of less altitude than Short Heath, accentuated the difficulty always experienced in supplying the higher parts of the district, and caused much inconvenience and danger. Though there was practically no frost after March 5th and no continuous frost after February 25th, water was delivered in carts in April. Under these circumstances as people were drinking water from the canal, from shallow wells liable to pollution, from carts of doubtful cleanliness and buckets liable to contamination, I advised

the Council to renew their efforts to get a more satisfactory supply, and to petition the help of the Local Government Board if their efforts failed. As a result of these efforts a temporary pump has been fixed at Lucknow, which I am informed has materially improved the supply from the mains to the higher parts, and the Water Engineer has promised to continue this mode of supply until new mains are laid down from Wolverhampton to Willenhall. Considering the liability of leaky water-pipes to act as land drains and to receive foul matters, it is little short of marvellous that there was only one case of Diphtheria, none of Typhoid Fever and that there were so few cases of Diarrhœa.

A sample of water taken from a well at the Navigation Inn, was examined and condemned as unfit to drink. Steps are being taken to remove the cause of the pollution.

The proposed new Bye-laws having received the sanction of the Local Government Board are now in force.

Twenty workshops were inspected. All except six had been limewashed since my last visit, and your Inspector reports that these have now been limewashed. There was no other nuisance in them.

Your Inspector has made an inspection of every house in the district under my guidance. A summary of his work is appended. He reports that all the privies and ashpits are structurally in order, but that the objectionable features pointed out in my last Annual Report, notably the cess-pit conveniences and the open ashpit arrangements favouring the lodgment of wet and consequent decomposition of contents are there in about the same numbers as hitherto.

Isolation Hospitals for the treatment of Small Pox and other contagious diseases—notably Scarlet Fever—are needed. I advised the Council to petition the County Council to get their district associated with a larger area, for which a hospital for joint use by several Councils may be erected for the treatment of Small Pox, and to make provision within their own district for the treatment of other infectious complaints. I am not aware that any petition to the County Council was sent, but the Noble Chairman of the County Council at a meeting of delegates from all the Sanitary

Authorities within the administrative County, at which I was present, concluded his remarks with the significant sentence “that every County *must* have sufficient and efficient Isolation Hospital accommodation.” It will therefore follow that District Councils will shortly have to choose between providing that accommodation themselves or having it provided for them by the County Council. As matters now stand, the delegates of the Northern and Southern halves of the County are going to separately consider the matter further, and then perhaps confer again with the Sanitary Committee of the County Council.

I still advise the adoption of the Notification Act, and further consideration of the disposal of sewage.

There is need for much improvement in the roads and the kerbing and channelling.

New houses are still much wanted, and are an actual necessity if there is to be any diminution in overcrowding.

Your Inspector reports the night-soil contractor has done his work satisfactorily.

Can the Council see their way to encourage the introduction of gas mains into the District, say, for a start, from the Midland Station to the Bridge Tavern? This is a matter which only indirectly affects the public health, but so far as I am able to observe much of the poverty of Short Heath is due to a want of enterprise, and I think there is ample room for improvement in the lock and key industries if they were only developed by the judicious introduction of small gas engines. Anything which will improve the trade of the district will improve the prosperity and domestic comforts of the people, and where there are more domestic comforts it will usually be found there is greater vigour of health.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

JOHN T. HARTILL,

M.O.H.

Willenhall,

January 27th, 1896.

TABLE A.

Shewing the Deaths classified according to Diseases and Ages, &c.

At all Ages.	Under One Year.	One and under Five.	Five and under 15.	Fifteen and under 25.	Twenty-five and under 65.	Sixty-five and upwards.
32	8	8	2	2	8	4

DEATHS.

	Under 5.	Over 5.
From Croup	1	
„ Measles	2	
„ Whooping Cough	1	
„ Diarrhœa	2	
„ Consumption		3
„ Bronchitis, Pneumonia & Pleurisy	5	2
„ Heart disease		1
„ Small Pox	0	0
„ Scarlet Fever		
„ Diphtheria		
„ Typhoid and other Fevers		
„ Influenza		
„ Cholera		
„ Erysipelas		
„ Rheumatic Fever		
„ Ague		
„ Injuries		
„ All other Diseases	5	10
Total	16	16

Deaths: Males 17 } Total, 32; equal to a Death-rate of 11·6
 „ Females 15 } per thousand.

Births; Males 54 } Total, 130; equal to a Birth-rate of 47·3
 „ Females 76 } per thousand.

Population Census 1891 .. 2514.
 „ Midsummer 1895 .. 2748.

Deaths in Union House, Wolverhampton, from the District 5.

Area in Acres at Midsummer .. 550.

TABLE B.

Shewing New Cases of Infectious Disease and Deaths therefrom, &c.

	New Cases.		Deaths.		Infected Houses.
	Under 5.	Over 5.	Under 5.	Over 5.	
Scarlet Fever ..	4	2			3
Diphtheria ..	1				1
Croup ..	1		1		1
Erysipelas ..		2			2
Measles ..	39	31	2		49
Whooping Cough	2		1		2
Diarrhœa ..	2	1	2		3
Chicken Pox ..	4	2			3
Influenza ..	1	16			12

The Notification of Infectious Diseases is not
Compulsory.

Death rate from preventable causes, including
Diarrhœa and Croup, 2·1 per thousand.

TABLE C.

Summary of Work by Inspector of Nuisances.

Houses Inspected	...	...	...	...	...	538
Schools	„	...	...	...	...	3
Dairies	„	twice	...	...	...	7
Cowsheds	„	„	...	...	...	7
Bakehouse	„	„	...	...	...	1
Slaughter-houses Inspected twice	...	...	...	...	...	3
Ashpits, privies, and pigsties Inspected	...	...	...	...	...	all
Informal Notices to abate overcrowding	...	...	...	...	...	2
Nuisances abated after notice	...	...	...	...	...	2
Informal Notices to abate Nuisances from ashpits and privies	...	...	...	...	...	} 2
Nuisances abated after notice	...	...	...	...	...	1
Nuisances not yet abated after notice	...	...	...	...	...	1
Informal Notices to limewash workshops	...	...	...	...	...	6
Limewashed after notice	...	...	...	...	...	6
Informal Notices to abate Nuisances from pigsties and deposits of refuse and manure	...	...	...	...	...	} 3
Nuisances abated after notice	...	...	...	...	...	3
Sample of Water taken for analysis	...	...	...	...	...	1
„ „ „ condemned as unfit for use	...	...	...	...	...	1
School disinfected in consequence of Infectious Disease	...	...	...	...	...	} 1
Formal Notices by Authority	...	...	...	...	...	0

